Panchayati Raj

NOV 1960

SEPTEMBER 1960

PANCHAYATI RAJ

(Incorporating Gram Sevak)

BHADRA-ASVINA 1882

Vol. 1 **SEPTEMBER 1960** **No. 6**

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Cover Design : B. N. Jijja

BUSINESS NOTICE

Single Copy : 15 nP.

Annual : Rs. 1·25

All enquiries regarding agency and rates of subscription and advertisements may be addressed to the Publications Division, Old Secretariat, Delhi-6. Editorial correspondence may be addressed to the Editor, *Panchayati Raj*, Ministry of Community Development & Cooperation, Krishi Bhavan, New Delhi.

Our Monthly Letter No.—6

2 - NOV 1960

New Delhi
September 16, 1960.

DEAR COMRADE,

I look forward to writing this open monthly letter to you through Panchayati Raj. No writing for a cause like this however is worth anything unless it is done from the heart. But for this, one must have a heart and the time to be in touch with it. Thus alone one can pour out a song or a tear that cries for an out-let. The work here is growing desperately hard and prolonged. It is more so because a Government is being made to do much more than what it really can. If people do not come forward in an organised way to manage their own affairs, somebody has to try to do it. That somebody has necessarily to be the Government in the conditions of today in India. In trying to do so Government fails to do not only what is expected but also what it normally does. In the process something worse happens. The initiative of the people gets lost. Those who work hard in Government work still harder but achieve much less. They wear their heart out on non-essentials.

You will have read in the press last month the enthusiastic debate that took place in the Parliament on Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj. Sovereignty in India now rests in the Parliament where you have elected your representatives. The representatives, one and all, are determined that their powers be shared by others along the line up to the village. They realise only too well that if the burden of rebuilding India is not shared by the people, the Parliament will be crushed under the weight of the burden. The Parliament building is built of solid stones. Its foundation however has been laid on Jamuna sand which is not too solid a matter. Parliament cannot survive with its democracy unless its foundation rests on the shoulders of the 400 millions of India's citizens. It is this realisation that prompted all Members of Parliament to ask for Panchayati Raj in all States in India.

Our representatives elected to the Panchayati Raj institutions should have proper education in the understanding of democracy and Panchayati Raj and Sahakari Samaj as a corollary. Our new panches and others above must have adequate knowledge of organisation, of the processes of agriculture, animal husbandry, irrigation, village industries, education, public health and other matters which are of direct concern for the day to day life of the village people. These responsibilities for local affairs must be borne by the people themselves through institutions such as panchayats, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads. The Members of Parliament demand further that these elected institutions from the grass roots must also share in national planning based on national priorities and tell the Parliament with a firm resolve, what they can contribute to programmes of national reconstruction.

The National Development Council is the highest body on national planning. It is presided over by the Prime Minister. It has Chief Ministers of States, the Central Ministers and members of the Planning Commission as its members. The National Development Council had a meeting early this week on the draft Third Five Year Plan. The Council has broadly approved the draft Plan. It has agreed that the major burden of local planning including food production, village industries and of local organisation—both panchayats and cooperatives, must be shared by the village people. State Governments will soon be preparing their plans for the States. The planning has to be done from the village upwards.

The Development Commissioners will be getting in touch with every village panchayat for the village plan. The plan will have to be drawn in the first instance on what the village can do with

resources that already exist locally in man and material. The village panchayats will then have to indicate what they can do if they receive assistance in money and material from Government, and if so the direction in which they would like such additional developments to take place. Agriculture being the biggest industry of India, Third Five Year Plan has to have its base resting on food production as the highest priority. In this the Panchayati Raj and the Sahakari Samaj have to play a significant part. Have you done any thinking on this? If you have not done so, it is never too late to make a beginning. You must begin to discuss these matters thread-bare with the first neighbour you come across. You should then carry this to your village panchayat and from there to the Block Panchayat Samiti or the Block Development Committee.

I am still not receiving any replies from you to the many problems that I pose to you through these monthly letters. You must begin to send the replies soon. As I mentioned to you last month, it is not happy to talk always from one end. It will grow into a bad habit and I would not like to cultivate it. We must talk to each other. When do we begin?

Yours sincerely,

GLIMPSES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

VIDUR

PANCHAYATI RAJ has come to stay. Even the greatest sceptics of the scheme will not deny that. The new pattern is bound to spread from State to State so as to take the whole country in its sweep in the near future. Most of the States have already accorded legislative approval to the scheme and the rest are going to follow sooner than later. It goes without saying that it has evoked interest amongst the masses and their representatives on a scale seldom equalled before. The recent debate on the subject held in the Lok Sabha is proof positive, if any were needed to support that. The subject gripped the opposition party leaders no less than the ruling party. Even the Speaker, Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar who is generally supposed not to take part in the debates, made a departure by contributing to the discussion when he praised the working of Panchayats in his home district Chitoor in Andhra Pradesh. The necessity and usefulness of Panchayati Raj was disputed by none. Some of the opposition members only regretted that the pace of its progress was rather too slow and one member even suggested that a model frame work of the Panchayati Raj pattern might be circulated to all States so that it could be adopted quickly and on a more uniform basis throughout the country. But, as was rightly pointed out by the Minister, that would not be an essentially democratic way of doing things. Each State has to evolve its own pattern of Panchayati Raj suited to its climate and the genius of its people.

TEETHING TROUBLES

From various reports emanating from Rajasthan and Andhra Pradesh, the two States where Panchayati Raj was first introduced, it has now become clear beyond a shadow of doubt that the teething troubles of the transition period are coming to an end and things are stabilising. The difficulties and troubles faced during the initial stages which had created some sense of despair in the minds of even the best of sympathisers and well-wishers of the scheme are being overcome. Due to delay in the transfer of funds and the necessary authorisation from the Account General to the newly created local bodies, there was delay in the payment of the salaries and allowances of the teachers. Naturally, this had sent a wave of dismay and resentment amongst the teachers in particular who obviously concluded that things instead of improving had deteriorated under the new set up. But as the initial dust raised by the in-coming Panchayati Raj subsided, the unsettled condition gave way to visions of a bright future. The signs

have already become apparent. Red-tapism is disappearing from more than one sphere. Rural dispensaries have begun to purchase medicines more quickly and easily than ever before.

KEEN ENTHUSIASM

Signs of definite improvement are visible on other fronts too. Elementary education seems to have received the greatest impetus at the hands of those otherwise known as illiterate panches. The number of school-going children,—both girls and boys has gone up. The school teachers have become more regular and punctual. This has been the result of the keen enthusiasm evinced by the Panchayats who have come forward with their ready-made and commonsense solutions of the various problems posed to them. It is interesting to know how a Panchayat Samiti in Rajasthan tried to tackle the issue of extending compulsory primary education in a few villages. It was argued that whereas it would not be so difficult to persuade the children staying in the village to join the school, it would be impossible to expect the out-door children such as the cowboys, shepherds and even the girls who have to attend to domestic chores at home, to join the regular school classes. Soon the Panchayat Samiti found a way out of this difficulty. It was suggested that for the benefit of the students of the latter category, classes might be held in two shifts, that is in the morning and at night when they do not do their daily work. Even the lack of books and writing material did not stand in the way of pushing ahead this scheme. Alphabets were written on the walls of their houses and on the palms of the left hand. The cowboys and shepherds had these alphabets written on the bodies of the cattle. This experiment is being watched with interest by many others who would like to adopt the same if it meets with success.

IMPROVEMENTS IN AGRICULTURE

It is in the field of agriculture however, that the Panchayats have made a marked progress. And this is as it should be. It is in tune with the requirements of the country and in line with the plans envisaged by the State and Central Governments. The demand for better seeds, fertilisers and irrigation water is mounting up day by day. In fact, there has not been equal initiative and effort both on the part of the people as well as the officials to forge cooperative institutions capable of arranging the services and supplies asked for. If greater progress is desired in this field, it is on the formation of dependable service cooperatives that we shall have to concentrate our attention and efforts. It will not be out of place to mention here that frequent complaints have come of supplies of fertilisers never reaching the farmers through their village service cooperatives, though the same are available at the Sahukar's next-door shop in the same village. It will be quite pertinent to ask from where the individual shopkeepers obtain their supplies when the cooperative federation has the sole monopoly for its sale. Obviously things are wrong somewhere, and need to be looked into. Weak organisation or pulls of party politicians or even temptation to make easy money in the black-market may be at the root of the trouble. These shall have to be exterminated in order to ensure health of the newly formed service cooperatives.

The Panchayats in Rajasthan have shown the way to tackle the available irrigation resources to the best possible advantage of the community. In this, they have spared neither money nor labour. At several places, anicuts are being put up across hilly 'nallas', to stop rain water from rushing down and conserve it so as to raise the subsoil water in the outlying catchment area. Several irrigation tanks, one of these 1,320 yards long, are being dug through 'Shramdan' at various places.

HUMAN PROBLEMS

There had been not a few human problems that the ushering in of the Panchayati Raj had thrown up and which now show clear signs of adjustment and are nearing solution. These were the products of the conflict inherent in the change-over such as the focus of power and responsibilities shifting from B.D.O. to the Chairman of the Panchayat Samiti and

(*Continued on Page* 16)

LETTERS

Weak Goes to the Wall

Sir,

THE TRUTH of the maxim, "The weak always goes to the wall", has been amply demonstrated in the case of villages. Agricultural production has been given top priority by the planners of the country. From the Prime Minister down to the lowest official—everyone in the Government hierarchy has been laying emphasis on the subject. In spite of all this, the village artisan is unable to get the needed steel quota for making agricultural implements and the farmer cannot get the desired supplies of fertilisers. Surely, one could not expect better results in such a situation. Recently, the Prime Minister himself took a serious view of the situation and wrote to all the Chief Ministers of States asking them to ensure proper distribution of iron and steel to fabricators of agricultural implements. Where lies the trouble? The trouble is that industrial sector being stronger than the agricultural, draws to itself, both through the open and black market, lion's share of the production of steel and fertilisers. The larger quota openly allotted to the big industries is understandable and controllable. But what is regrettable is that the little quota earmarked for agriculture changes hands in the 'Black Market' and is lured away by the big industries. Unfortunately even the co-operatives have not been able to check it. Distracted by party politics, and the temptation to make money in the Black market, the cooperative societies are known to have sold their stocks for purposes other than agriculture. And thus on paper the impression is given out that the cooperatives are doing very well and the farm output is imagined to have increased in proportion to the quantity of fertilisers supposed to have been put in the fields. But as a matter of fact, the situation is just the reverse.

All the time, it is the industries that thrive and fatten at the cost of agriculture and in the name of agriculture. It is high time that some effective measures are devised to protect agriculture against the wanton and undesirable encroachments of industries.

15-8-60
Mukhmelpur,
Delhi.

Yours etc.
Bir Bal

Village Teachers

Sir,

Under the Community Development programme, the village teachers are not being made full use of for assisting the VLWs and BDOs in providing education in agricultural extension or better citizenship to the village people. The village teachers have lot of spare time and they are intimately acquainted with the village people. As such, they can exercise greater influence on the minds of adult villagers for whom the C.D. programme is primarily meant.

Yours etc.
Brij Ballav Gupta
S.E.O.

Jaipur,
Rajasthan.

[*The Government is already considering a proposal that orientation of teachers in the C.D. programme should form an integral part of a Primary Teachers' Training Course.*—EDITOR.]

Educate the Adults

Sir,

Of late, attendance in the Adult Education Centres in the Community Development Blocks has been decreasing. The main reason for this appears to be that the psychological needs of the adults are not taken into consideration in organising such classes. The education of adults should be entrusted only to teachers who understand the psychology of grown-up people and are comparatively older in age.

The classes for adults should be conducted during night and also on days which are otherwise public holidays. At present, the adult education teachers observe all public holidays. In fact these are the days when the adults are more free to receive education. In order to maintain the interest of adults, arrangements should be made for enlivening social education with the help of magic lantern shows, cinema shows, etc. Indoor and

outdoor games should also be provided on á regular basis.

Yours etc.
Shanti Lal Joshi,
Pulia Kalan, Gram Sevak.
Dist. Bhilwara,
Rajasthan.

Technical Training

Sir,

Our country needs a large number of technical hands. Will it not be proper if the Government decides to train the Gram Sevaks in short term technical courses like veterinary assistants and auxiliary health workers etc.? The Gram Sevaks do not need any further extension training since they are already extension-*cum*-technical workers. In this way it is possible to train the Gram Sevaks in a short period of say one year or six months only rather than spending two years on training the freshers. This will not only save time but also benefit the Gram Sevaks by making them eligible for promotion.

Yours etc.
18-8-60 *A Gram Sevak.*
Nirmal Block,
Andhra Pradesh.

B.D.Os. and the Panchayati Samitis

Sir,

Ever since the Panchayati Raj was ushered in, the relations betwen the officials and the non-officials in the blocks have gone from bad to worse. The Block Advisory Committees now turned into the Block Development Committees or the panchayat samitis have assumed the role of evaluators or inspectors. They look upon officials with an eye of suspicion and fear, instead of cooperating with them. They smell something wrong in every deed of the official. They keep a diary of the doings of the field staff. The officials maintain a thorough record of persons whom the non-official oblige. Thus both are busy in building their case for throwing mud at each other when the proper time comes. The BDOs. and the Panchayat Samitis are both aspiring to assume greater powers in their hands. The power at present vested with the Pradhan of the Panchayat Samiti to write the confidential report of the B.D.Os. is fraught with dangerous consequences. Such an authority should be delegated gradually after taking full stock of the situation and ensuring that the same will not be misused.

11-7-60. Yours etc.,
Broach, Gujarat *N. VYAR.*

I JOIN THE YOUTH CLUB

Kamla Pandey

I AM Kamla Pandey—a youth of 20 years of age born in an orthodox Brahmin family with religious traditions. Rather than adhering to my traditional profession of religious priestcraft, I have adopted agriculture as my avocation. I own about 32 acres of land which I am farming myself. A major part of my time is taken up by agricultural activities. My village, like my family has been one of the millions of traditional villages of India with mud-houses, narrow lanes, poor cattle and inhabited by orthodox and conservative people.

July 13, 1955 stands out as an important date. On this day were laid the foundations of a big change that gradually overtook me and my village. The extension officer of our Development Block came to my village and after a brief survey of the same he organised a 'youth club'. The object of this club has been to impart to its young members training on scientific and rational basis in agricultural practices and other processes of improving life so that when they come of age, they may prove themselves efficient farmers and better citizens. Originally the strength of our club was 15 only but now its membership has gone up to 60.

OUR ACTIVITIES

We started our activities with economic projects including agriculture, animal husbandry and crafts. The club infused in us keen interest for these activities. We started raising better quality crops by improved techniques. I was the first to take to the improved plough. We made increasing use of fertilisers. A sense of healthy competition grew among us. Soon we saw the result before our eyes. We grew tomatoes weighing up to 1 lb. each, raddish as big

(*Continued on page* 7)

COMMUNITY ON THE MOVE

TRIBAL AREA FORGES AHEAD

PARTICIPATION of the Adivasis in their economic development under Community Development Pilot Projects has been phenomenal during the last four years in Ranchi. The Training-*cum*-Production Centres have stimulated small-scale industries and village handicrafts, and are playing a vital role in providing more employment as well as training in different handicrafts at home.

Of the numerous programmes undertaken in Ranchi, the recently organised Blindmen's Cooperative Society is most inspiring. The society's efforts for all-round development and economic self-sufficiency are simply admirable. All the twelve members of the society, including the Secretary, most of whom are teenagers, are now economically self-sufficient.

The Toy Development Centre in Ranchi is the only centre of its kind in the State of Bihar. About 130 different types of wooden and papier mache toys are being produced. The annual production during the year 1957-58 was worth about Rs. 19,000: Rs. 29,309 in 1958-59 and Rs. 38,985 in 1959-60. The toys manufactured here have a ready market throughout the country.

The Ranchi Leather Goods Manufacturing Cooperative Society is another very active organisation. The Society Started functioning with a paid-up capital of Rs. 6,000 only. Now its working capital is about Rupees one lakh, about 50 per cent of which has been received from the State Government in the shape of loan and subsidy.

PANCHAYATGHAR THROUGH SELF-HELP IN MADHYA PRADESH

The people of village Mohad of Durg district in Madhya Pradesh have set an inspiring example for others by constructing a building worth Rs. 5,000 for the village Panchayat. They contributed over Rs. 4,000 in cash and labour for this building. They also contributed Rs. 1001 in cash for the construction of the primary school building and labour worth Rs. 1001 and Rs. 700 for the construction of the village road and a building for the village youth mandal respectively.

The growing interest towards village development in the people of tiny village Mohad has awakened the neighbouring villages also.

IRRIGATION EFFORTS IN RAJASTHAN

Rajasthan is giving great importance to Minor Irrigation works in its large dry areas. In an Kotda, anicut is being built across a hilly nalla—it is 80 ft long, 24 ft deep and 52 ft wide at bottom tapering to 15 ft at top. It is estimated to cost Rs. 21,000, 25% being contributed by the village. The anicut will stop rain water rushing through the Nalla so as to raise sub-soil water in a few square miles in the catchment area, so that 70 existing irrigation wells will have more water and 30 new ones will be sunk. This will increase production by 50%. A similar anicut is being built in village Ajaisar. In village Chori-awas a very big irrigation tank is being built. It is 1,320 yds. long, the height of the Kucha bund is 25 ft at the top and 60 ft at the bottom. It will cost Rs. 10,000, of which 25% will be by contribution.

VILLAGE WITHOUT LIQUOR

Surupalli, a village 35 miles from Kolhapur (Maharashtra) has been completely freed from the drink evil. At a special function arranged at Surupalli, Dr. T. R. Naravane, Minister for Prohibition and Social Welfare, gave an awarad of Rs. 250 to the Village Sarpanch on behalf of the Gandhi Smarak Nidhi.

MADHYA PRADESH'S BEST VILLAGE

Kurela,—a small village with a population of 410 has been adjudged the best in Chhatarpur district in Madhya Pradesh this year during a "Shramdan" and cleanliness fortnight observed there recently. The village will be awarded a prize of Rs. 1000. The mud-houses are white washed. The village has six public latrines and

six urinals besides 'pucca' bathing platforms near public wells. Every house has a soakage-pit and there are 20 smokeless 'chullas' in the village. The village has pucca cattle sheds. A Panchayat Bhawan and a school building have been partially completed. The people have collected bricks for an Ayurvedic dispensary. The total cost of works completed by the village people, during the fortnight, is estimated at Rs. 9,500.

INSPIRING EXAMPLE OF SELF-HELP

The villagers of Kherawa (Etah district) in Uttar Pradesh have, through voluntary labour, constructed a school building, panchayatghar, and sunk 10 sanitary wells.

The panchayat building has been constructed at a cost of Rs. 8,000 of which the Government share totalled only a paltry sum of Rs. 1,500. The total value of "Shramdan" done by the people for constructing various buildings is Rs. 30,000.

Paved with bricks, the lanes are dustless. Whitewashed buildings and modern drainage have given the village a face-lift.

The villagers have found in the panchayat an effective substitute for the lathi, which they had recourse to in settling disputes in the past. The panchayat is the final arbitrator of all cases ranging from petty thefts to a yokel's amorous adventures.

WHAT SELF-HELP CAN ACHIEVE

Once the most exploited village under the zamindari system, Bareha in the Goshainganj development block (Lucknow district) is now a flourishing village with the amenities of a township. The village has felt the impact of the community development programme for there are at present 12 drinking water wells sunk partly through voluntary labour and partly through Government's contribution, whereas none existed before. Two community listening radio sets blare out commercial and other news to the villagers at regular intervals.

A community cattle shed built at a cost of Rs. 12,000 shelters the agriculturists' cattle. A cooperative society, a school and a panchayatghar constructed at a cost of Rs. 16,000 are some of the other institutions set up by the villagers themselves through self-help. The village annexed the first prize of Rs. 1,000 in the recent health competition. To crown this achievement, Bareha was adjudged the best village in the Goshainganj block for development activity and was awarded a running shield last year. Streets and lanes are paved with bricks. Gone are the days of forced labour, of exploitation and oppression under the yoke of the Zamindari system. The village now looks like a miniature township.

I Join the Youth Club

(Continued from page 5)

as the thighs of a wrestler, brinjals nine inches long and succeeded in almost doubling the average yield of wheat and paddy crops. Those who had no lands, adopted raising improved breed heifers and poultry. We try to meet at a common place at least twice a week. At the end of the meeting, we participate in games, cultural and other recreational activities. Besides our old games like Kabaddi and wrestling, we have learnt some new games like volleyball, tug-of-war and putting the weight. We have held several inter-village tournaments of these games.

Social service has been an important part of our youth club activities. We have organised Shramdan on various occasions, such as the earth work on the 2-mile long approach road to the village, construction of the community centre and the digging of a community well. We are at present running an adult literacy centre where 30 old and middle-aged persons come daily to learn reading and writing.

FESTIVALS

We have been taking keen and enlightened interest in all our national and religious festivals. In all our activities, we are helped and guided by our young and enthusiastic Sarpanch and the extension officer of the Block.

SONS OF THE SOIL

PUSA RAMULU BUILDS PEOPLE'S TAJ

PUSA RAMULU, an ordinary Harijan, is one amongst millions in this country! Till yesterday, he was hardly known outside the small village of Repalavada in Mysore State. Today, his name is a household word in the neighouring area. Nature was rather unkind to him. He saw his dear wife dying in his lonely hut because no medical aid could reach her. The thatched hut and a few belongings were all that he had. These too he lost in a fire that broke out after some time. He lived and worked, little knowing what for. In course of time, he was able to save one hundred rupees. What should he do with this money? Buy a baffalo, or build a hut or find a new partner in life? No. He decided not to have any of these things. The vision of his deceased sweetheart struggling for life and falling a prey to death because he could not get her a drop of medicine trembled before his eyes. He decided to give all his savings for the construction of a Primary Health Centre which alone could prevent such tragedies befalling others. But what could Ramulu's hundred rupees do when thousands were needed to build the Centre? He did not bother. He did his part, lit the lamp and passed it on to others. And lo! it worked a miracle. Lamp after lamp was kindled. Within a fortnight, a sum of rupees ten thousand was collected, thus satisfying the target of people's contribution for the Health Centre as laid down by the Block authorities. Soon the construction of the building will start. When completed, Ramulu may well look upon it as his 'Taj' which will not be a mere lifeless memorial of mortar and stone but a Taj—throbbing with life and bringing relief to many a griefstricken households.

AN EXAMPLE WORTH EMULATING

(As told by Shri C. M. Medappa, Gram Sevak under training)

[*There are hundreds and thousands of irrigation wells in our countryside, which have surplus irrigation water. If these could be allowed to be used by the neighbouring farmers in the same spirit in which Kariappa Gowda allowed the use of his well, thousands of acres of additional land would be easily brought under irrigation at no extra cost. This will solve to some extent our problem of increased food production. Here is an example worthy of emulation.*—EDITOR.]

HEBBAL, the site for Basic Agricultural Training Centre in Mysore State, is more urban than rural in appearance. While undergoing training here, I went out for a stroll, one fine evening after the classes were over. I met a poor farmer, Shri Krishnappa by name. He told me that he had a large family consisting of seven children. From his holding of ½ acre, he could hardly produce enough to make both ends meet. In order to supplement his income, therefore, he had joined as a farm labourer at the Training College Farm.

The poverty of Shri Krishnappa made such an effect on me that I decided to visit his home in the village next day. During the course of my talks with him, he told me that the plot had been left uncultivated for want of irrigation water. He added that though his neighbour Shri Kariappa Gowda had an irrigation well which had enough surplus water yet Shri Gowda did not spare even a drop of water to be used on his neighbour's fields.

I thought of a plan to persuade Shri Krishnappa to part with his surplus available water. I started going to his house to cultivate friendship with his children. The first day, I met Kariappa Gowda on the field near the well, where he grew exotic vegetables. He did not care to talk to me in a manner I had expected. I enquired about the method, the cost of cultivation and the output per acre. The replies were given in an indifferent and half-hearted manner. My first meeting with him was not

very encouraging, but even then I did not lose heart.

Next evening, I went to his fields with my camera. His four children were there watering the vegetables. Krishnappa was applying fertilizers. I started chit-chatting with the children and asked them many questions as to the school and the classes in which they studied. They were equally eager to ask me questions. The youngest child came to me quietly and tried to touch my camera. I asked the father and the children to pose for a photograph. I took a photograph of the children watering the fields and the father putting in the fertilisers. After some time, I got the film washed and printed. The photograph came out nicely. Armed with a copy, I went to Kariappa's house. The eldest boy came running to me and pressed me for the photo. They were all very pleased to see the photo. The mother soon prepared a delicious dish and offered it to me which I accepted. From that time onwards I became almost a regular visitor to their house.

After some time I was requested to take a group-photograph of the family which I did without any objection. On the day the snap was taken I was given a warm welcome and I was asked to take my night food in their company to which I could not but give my consent. Casually, I started talking about the C.D. Programme and the expected active co-operation from the farmers of our countryside. Shri Gowda heard me patiently and then started explaining the attitude of his neighbours. I told him gently to be helpful to others. I explained if others become wealthy and happy he should himself feel happy and proud for that was the real community spirit. Hearing this the gentlemen became silent. Encouraged by the thought that silence is half consent, I persisted in my efforts to woo him. Then I came to the subject of allowing his neighbours to make use of the surplus irrigation water available with him. To my great joy and surprise, he agreed.

I informed Shri Krishnappa and the other 3 farmers about the availability of irrigation water. They thanked me heartily and asked me what crops could be grown there with advantage. I told them since Bangalore City was very near, there was a pressing demand for vegetables to cater to the needs of the rapidly growing population of the city. I recommended sowing of a few suitable vegetables and they followed my instructions. Shri Krishnappa took special care and grew cabbage only. After the necessary soil tests were over, he undertook various intensive cultivation measures such as improved seed and liberal use of fertilisers. Within a period of 100 days, the crop matured and was ready for harvest. The neighbours were astonished to see how the fallow land yielded such a rich harvest.

Shri Krishappa raised 4,000 cabbages from ½ acre of land. Each cabbage weighed 4 to 6 lbs. He transported the produce in a bullock cart to the city and disposed it of for Rs. 1,200. Krishnappa came to me one day and offered me Rs. 100 to accept as a present for my efforts. I gently told him to keep the present with him. However, I requested him to collect all farmers near the well of Kariappa where I would meet them in the evening. I went there with a garland. On reaching the spot, I found that all the farmers with their family members had gathered there. Soon I garlanded Kariappa Gowda the owner of the well. I delivered a brief speech praising the generosity of the donor who allowed the utilisation of the surplus water of his well by his neighbours. I suggested that the villagers should present a silver cup to Shri Kariappa for his service to the community. The villagers lost no time in arranging a function in the village and a silver cup was presented to Shri Kariappa.

NEWS FROM STATES

ANDHRA PRADESH

The Andhra Pradesh Government has decided to transfer the activities of the Social Welfare Department and the control of minor irrigation sources to Zila Parishads. The minor irrigation sources are at present controlled by the Board of Revenue.

* * *

A further expansion of the Guntakal Cooperative Spinning Mills has been approved by the Andhra Pradesh Government. The Mills have at present a spindle strength of 16,000 which is to be increased by the installation of an additional 3,500 spindles. When expanded the monthly production will go up from 750 bales of 20s counts to 900 bales. The Mills, which were the first of their kind to be started in the erstwhile Andhra State were designed for a total number of 22,000 spindles.

* * *

A pilot scheme for agricultural credit in twenty Samiti Blocks at the rate of ten villages in each Block is being launched by the Andhra Pradesh Government. Under the scheme each village will prepare an agricultural production programme on the basis of (*i*) full utilisation of irrigation facilities including maintenance of field channels in good condition by the beneficiaries; (*ii*) multiplication in the village of the approved seeds and the supply in kind to those who are not in a position to pay in advance; (*iii*) adequate supply of fertilisers; (*iv*) adequate provision of compost and green manures in the village; and (*v*) contour bunding.

The village agricultural production programme is to be linked with cooperative marketing. Central Banks will advance adequate short-term and medium-term credit to the village cooperative societies on the basis of the production programme and other relevant factors, more especially advance for approved seeds and fertilisers.

* * *

BOMBAY

The Bombay Government has decided to make use of various forms of entertainments such as ballad singing, Hari-kathas, kirtans, bhajans, dramas, etc. as media for promoting a well-informed and constructive attitude towards the developmental activities. Under this scheme, experienced ballad singers, kirtankars, kala-pathaks, drama artists, etc. will be employed for the purpose of popularising the ideas of community development to villagers through songs and bhajans specially composed for the purpose.

* * *

DELHI

A well-equipped auditorium has been built in Alipur Development Block in Delhi. Twice a week, hundreds of villagers flock to the new auditorium to see plays, to listen to radio programmes and to sing and dance as only villagers can. Films and documentaries are also screened occasionally. The auditorium, 42 feet by 18 feet, is yet to get power. A sum of Rs. 2,300 was spent on equipping the auditorium, as also at various social education centres in the villages in the block, the Radio Rural Forums are conducted regularly. Each forum consists of 15 to 20 villagers. They listen to specialised programmes of AIR connected with life on farms and then discuss the various issues raised in broadcasts.

* * *

Timely credit, combined with technical advice, has resulted in appreciable increase in agricultural production and farming income in 63 villages in the Mehrauli area around Delhi. This was disclosed in an evaluation report on the project by the Indian Cooperative Union which has been running a rural development and credit project in the area for the last 22 months. The report reveals that of the 1,420 farming families in the area nearly 80% have so far benefited from the credit facilities provided at 6¼% interest. Short-term loans were used by farmers for buying improved seeds and chemical fertilizers, while medium-term loans financed minor irrigation projects and

the purchase of farm equipment. All loans were given on trust, taking into account only the productive capacity of the proposed farming operations and the potentialities of the farming family. The farmers of the project area have amply justified this trust. It is stated that 87% to 95% of all loans were repaid according to schedule. Failure to repay was usually due to wrong assessment, crop failure, death of cattle or illness in the family; the cases of wilful refusal to pay were very few indeed.

* * *

MADHYA PRADESH

VILLAGE PIPARIA Turkai in Patharia block in Damoh district has been adjudged the best village in Madhya Pradesh. At a presentation ceremony held recently Shri Ramnath Patel, the Sarpanch received on behalf of the village Government's merit award from the State Development Commissioner.

* * *

MYSORE

THE MYSORE Government will advance loans of the order of Rs. 13 crores to agriculturists during 1960-61. By the end of June, 60 there will be 2,000 service cooperatives in the State. The number of members of cooperative societies is expected to increase by 80,000 this year.

* * *

RAJASTHAN

THE RAJASTHAN Government have decided that contract for work up to estimated value of Rs. 20,000 could be given to labour cooperative societies without inviting tenders. A labour cooperative society submitting a tender could be entrusted with the work costing up to Rs. 1 lakh, at 5 per cent less than the lowest amount quoted in a tender for the work. The Government's decision is aimed at encouraging labour contract cooperative societies in the State.

* * *

PUNJAB

THERE ARE now 12,596 panchayats in Punjab covering 22,053 villages. Out of the 90,000 panches, 10,511 belong to the Scheduled Castes and Backward Tribes. Four hundred and thirty panchayats have Harijan sarpanches. The panchayats constructed 8,477 miles of roads, 8,888 panchayat ghars and serais, opened 327 dispensaries and started 7,253 libraries. Over 5,500 of them have their own radio sets. The panchayats contributed voluntary labour worth Rs. 82 lakhs.

* * *

UTTAR PRADESH

THE U.P. Government has decided that the panchayat elections in the State would be conducted by secret ballot.

* * *

Mr. Justicc Broome of the Allahabad High Court recently held that a marketing cooperative society registered under the Cooperative Societies Act was not a Government organization so as to render persons employed by the aforesaid society as persons in the service of the State Government.

SIX SERVICE cooperative societies were organised during January at Lagumuddepalli, Achopalli, Balareddipalli, Sommathpur, Kuthakote and Paragodu in the Bagepalli Development Block. As many as 299 new members were enrolled and a sum of Rs. 3,196 collected towads share capital. Medium-term loan applications for a sum of Rs. 71,850 were investigated during the month of January, 1960.

* * *

EARTH WORK for two miles of roads and drainage was completed by the people of villages Tavarakere and Thigalarapalya, in Turuvekere Development Block.

* * *

'A service cooperative society of stone breakers' was declared open in the village of Kachigatta in Arsikere Development Block during the month of December, 1959.

* * *

TWO SERVICE cooperative societies were formed, one at Guddenahalli and another at Mugalur in Turuvekere Development Block. The villagers collected Rs. 1,000 worth of shares and asked for the registration of the societies.

PANCHAYATI RAJ

[The scheme of democratic decentralisation as formulated in the Balwantray G. Mehta Team Report and as adopted in Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan and certain other States came up for discussion in the Lok Sabha on August 3, 1960. Enthusiastic support was extended to the scheme by all sections of the House. In fact, almost all the members who participated in the debate criticised the delay in the countrywide implementation of the scheme. Even the Speaker, Shri Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, exercising his right under Rule 360 of the Procedure of the Lok Sabha, broke new ground when he spoke for the first time as a Member of the House and praised the functioning of Panchayat Samitis in his home district Chittoor, in Andhra Pradesh. Below, we give a brief resume of the debate.—EDITOR].

RAM KRISHNA GUPTA

The most important feature of the Balwantray Mehta Committee Report is that it has recommended a three-tier system for the functioning of Panchayati Raj. I believe that this system is the most important safeguard for the success of the coming development programme because it vests ultimate power in the hands of the representatives of the people.

No steps have been taken in most of the States for the implementation of the recommendations of the Team. Government should ensure that action on the Report is immediately initiated in all the States and power is handed over to the people in the matter of development. The Central Government should prepare a model legislation for the guidance of the States in this connection.

AJIT SINGH SARHADI

I would suggest that the Gram Sabhas should be the kind of City States where the people participate directly. I was surprised to find that certain States have limited the functions of these Sabhas. I would stress that the Gram Sabhas should exercise supervision over the work of the Panchayats. Not only would I give that power to the Gram Sabhas, but I would go further and say that the entire people of the Block Samitis should be given a chance to meet together.

K. T. K. TANGAMANI

There is a tussle between the Village Officers and the Panchayat Presidents; the former cannot contest the elections. Some device must be found whereby they can be absorbed in the popular set-up.

The Panchayats must become part of the administrative set-up of the State so that they can secure adequate finances.

The Presidents of the Panchayats must not automatically become members of the Panchayat Samitis; if that has to be, they should be directly elected by the people of the area.

SURENDRANATH DWIVEDI

By not insisting on uniformity in all the States, the Central Government is bringing in more chaos than improvement in the existing system. The Balwant Rai Mehta Team has suggested the simultaneous operation of the Panchayats, Panchayat Samitis and Zila Parishads, but that suggestion is not being acted upon. It is essential that uniform practice is followed in this regard.

The Panchayats must have the resources and the power and responsibility to undertake development work. At least a fourth of the budgetary resources of the country should be set apart for rural development.

We should seriously consider whether the Constitution should not be amended so that the democratic organisation on the village level gets some statutory support.

N. G. RANGA

Uniformity enforced by the Centre in the matter of development programmes would not give any chance to the States for experimentation.

There should be a Panchayat Grants Commission on the lines of the University Grants Commission, which might be headed by a sitting

or retired High Court Judge, for the disbursement of funds to Panchayats. Another Commission with a quasi-judicial set-up, helped by the representatives of the people, could handle the elections to Panchayats.

All political parties should take a vow that they would not interfere with the elections to Panchayats and other organisations under the three-system.

MATHURA DASS MATHUR

Many of the States have neither accepted nor implemented the Report of the Team. Unless the Constitution is amended, the Panchayati Raj, as envisaged by the Team, cannot be brought about.

The Report is out of date in that it has suggested an official to be the chairman of the Zila Parishad. There has already been a deviation from this recommendation in Rajasthan.

In Rajasthan, we have effected real decentralisation of power. The budget of the Panchayat Samitis in Rajasthan comes to about Rs. 10 crores. The State Government has no control over it. There is separate audit for the Samitis. A separate Public Service Commission for the Samitis has also been constituted.

DR. M. S. ANEY

The community development programme has not produced the desired results and the only remedy to me appears to be decentralisation. But the policy of the Government is not decentralisation but further centralisation. Enthusiasm must be created amongst the people for the scheme of decentralisation.

S. K. DEY

It has been suggested by some friends that there should be a model legislation by the Centre in regard to the scheme of democratic decentralisation. I am quite sure that this House will appreciate that whenever any model legislation, as such, is sent out by the Centre, it has the immediate tendency of suppressing the initiative of the States and preventing them from thinking. Conditions vary widely from one area to another. What this Ministry is trying to do is to discuss with individual State Governments their legislation, and making available to them the experiences of others. It is wrong to say that the Government are trying to spread confusion instead of a uniform pattern of development for the whole country. We are trying to ensure that there is uniformity of approach in the fundamentals. What are these fundamentals? The first: is there a genuine transfer of responsibility to the people and their institutions? Secondly: what are the levels at which decentralisation is taking place? Thirdly: what are the safeguards that have been adopted to see that the popular institutions would not be unduly controlled and directed by the Government apparatus above? Before a legislation goes to the State Legislature, we try to see whether it satisfies these basic points, and if it does not, we try to bring the discrepancies, as we find them, to the notice of the State Government.

JUDICIAL COMMISSION

On the question of transfer of power, it has been suggested that to obviate State control, there should be a judicial commission to discharge the responsibility of dispensing the Government funds between the different panchayats in the State. Once the judiciary is placed in the position of administering funds between hundreds of panchayats in the country, it would not be any different from an administrative organisation. Therefore, a judicial organisation, if it is to be appointed at all, must be there for other purposes, not for administering funds perhaps to see that the appointment of staff in the block samitis and parishads is made according to certain, proper, correct criteria. That is being adopted by different States in different ways. I have no doubt about it that just as we have here in the Centre the Union Public Service Commission, and we have the State Public Service Commissions, in the same way, eventually, there will have to be a Panchayat Public Service Commission. There is no alternative to it. It is coming.

PROPER TRAINING

The second thing we should aim at is the creation of administrative and technical

competence in the representatives of the people, so that they can form sub-committees at the Panchayat, Block and the Zila Parishad levels, thereby complementing the efforts of the Block staff and helping in the implementation of their programme in subjects like production, welfare, communications and other matters. That training programme has been undertaken all over the country in all States.

ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES

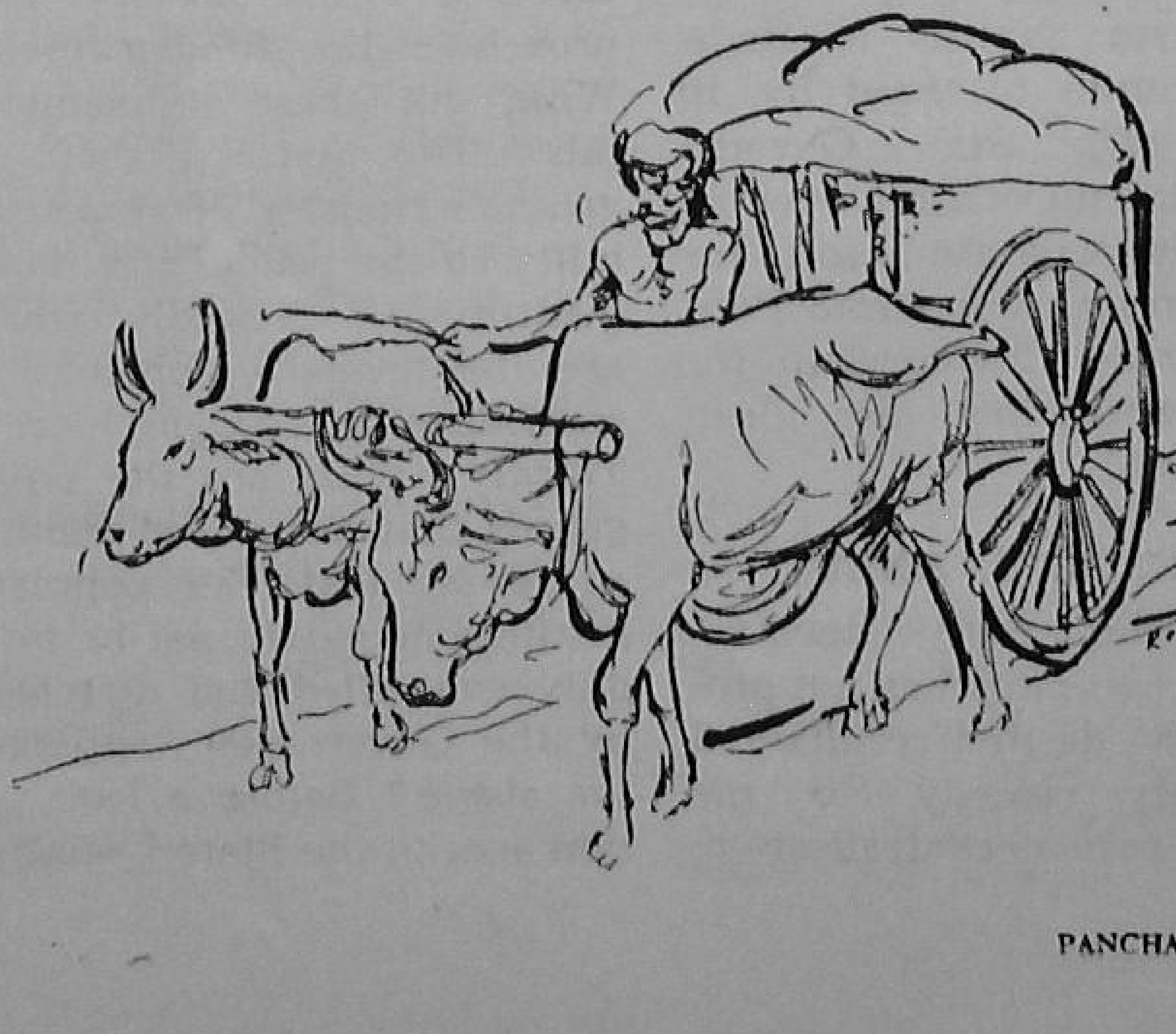
It has been mentioned that political parties should take a vow that they should not fight elections at the panchayat and higher levels. But there can be good politics and there can be bad politics. In fact, I would like all the politicians in this country to go out into the countryside and teach the people what democracy means. That is politics. That is the politics of today, and I would like all the political parties to go there and try to cross each other in disseminating knowledge on the working of democracy, so that people know what exactly to expect of themselves and of the representatives that they have elected to all these institutions.

FAITH IN VILLAGE

There is a feeling held by quite a large section of people in this country that the village people are so ignorant and so useless that you cannot entrust any responsibility to them. The village people are today being asked to elect Members of Parliament, many of whom they may not know personally, who will have the right in this sovereign House even to surrender the sovereignty that they have. If the right to surrender even the sovereignty this House possesses is not there, there is no sovereignty at all. If we can entrust this responsibility to the people to elect representatives who can be completely sovereign, we cannot understand the anomaly and absurdity when we say in the same breath that the village people are not wise enough and competent enough to elect panchayats which will be able to spend a thousand or two thousand rupees or implement their agricultural programmes or animal husbandry programmes.

It has been suggested that the village people are faction-ridden and that the panchayati raj is going to create a lot of trouble. We felt that because they were faction-ridden, it is absolutely necessary that the institutions at the village level and the higher level should be given special responsibilities for the programme. In the past, these village institutions used to utilise most of their energies in factions for the simple reason that they had not enough of work to do. It is just like in a family, where there are no children and no work to do, even the husband and wife begin to quarrel with each other. And, that is exactly what has happened in these village institutions.

I have no doubt that eventually these people's organisations, once they begin to function will develop so much momentum and strength on their own that there is no Government in the country which can resist the inevitable development that must take place, namely, that the whole Government organisation at whatever level it functions will have to be placed subordinate and responsive to the people's organisation functioning at that level.



JAIPUR ZILA PARISHAD AND THE THIRD FIVE YEAR PLAN

FOLLOWING Rajasthan Government's decision that the third Plan for the State would be formulated at the Panchayat Samiti level by properly assessing the felt needs of the people and resources, the Third Five Year Plan for Jaipur district has been discussed and finalised by the Zila Parishad. This is the third and last phase of the district level plan formulation programme.

The Third Plan for Jaipur district would involve an expenditure of Rs. 5,71,30,000 of which 50 per cent would be in the form of Government assistance and the rest 50% would be met from the Panchayat Samiti resources and public participation.

The district plan which has been divided into three parts, *viz.*, Panchayat Samiti Plans, Departmental plans and plans for municipalities, not only reflect, the ambition and needs of the village but has also evoked much awakening and enthusiasm among the village folk who have now begun to think themselves as partners in formulation and execution of the third plan.

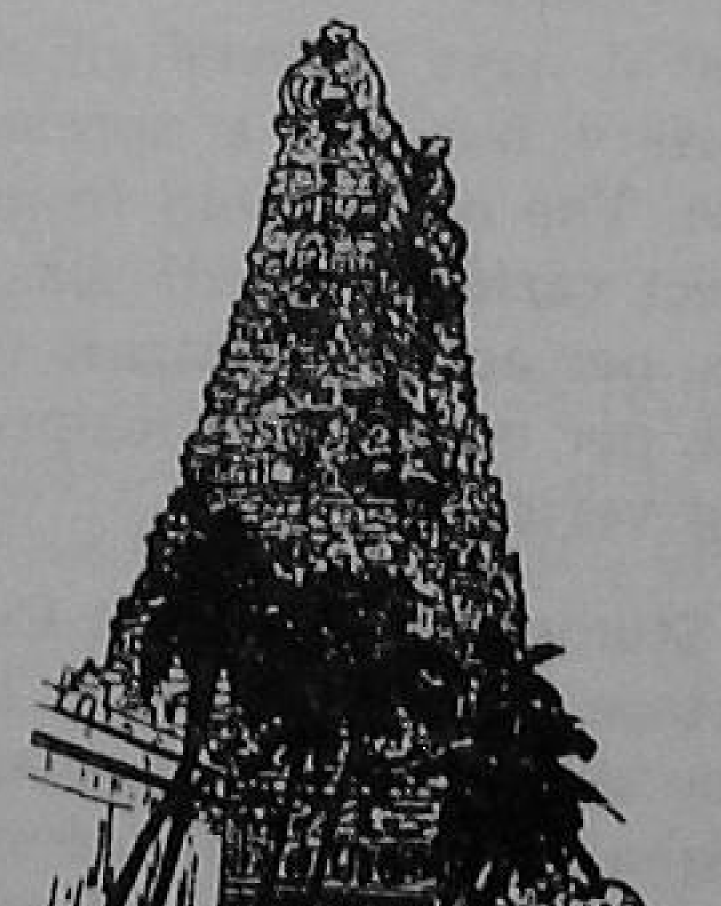
According to the draft plan, which is being submitted to the State Government for inclusion in the State Third Five Year Plan, the per capita expenditure during the third plan period would come to a little less than Rs. 50. Seventeen Panchayat Samitis are expected to raise a sum of Rs. 73,12,000 from their own resources and Rs. 2,12,24,000 would be contributed as peoples' participation, which forms 13 and 37 per cent respectively of the total expenditure on the third Plan.

AGRICULTURAL PROGRAMME

Obviously much stress has been laid on the agricultural programme which alone claims more than 39 per cent of the total expenditure. The agricultural programme when fulfilled, would yield about 25 per cent of food-grains, pulses, oilseeds and other agricultural commodities in the district. More than 50 per cent of the total plan expenditure has been earmarked for the production schemes in Agricultural, Animal husbandry and Industries. The Second biggest item which claims 17 per cent is education, the rest of the sum will be spent on social welfare, housing, rural water supply, cooperation, forests, communications and family planning.

VILLAGE-WISE SURVEY

The draft district plan was prepared after a detailed village-wise survey of existing resources and felt-needs of the people. In every village, Gram Sabhas were convened and were asked to fix priorities. Information was collected from each village regarding existing level of development under each sector. On the basis of the collected data plans were formulated at Panchayat Samiti level. The plans received from the Panchayat Samiti level were consolidated by the District Development Officer and submitted to the Zila Parishad. Though the bigger items such as electricity, irrigation projects and heavy industries etc. which do not come under the perview of these decentralised bodies, have been left out of this draft plan, yet these bodies have submitted their constructive suggestions and priorities for due consideration of the State Government. They have also made suggestions for district plans which will be executed departmentally. The departmental plans would involve an expenditure of over 3 crores of rupees for the third plan period.



USEFUL TIPS

ALUMINIUM NOT INJURIOUS

MANY PEOPLE in India believe that Aluminium vessels are injurious for health for these breed diseases. But recent scientific investigations have proved this to be quite wrong. Aluminium has been adjudged quite useful for food canning. Aluminium cans are being increasingly used, particularly in the United States, primarily replacing tin-plate. It has been found that processed food will require inside enamelling to obtain a shelf life acceptable under any circumstances. There is practically little difference in colour and flavour between canned food packed in aluminium cans protected against interior corrosion and the same food packed in a tin-plate container.

WEEDING : PROFITABLE AND WASTEFUL

Studies on groundnut at Hyderabad have revealed that it pays to weed an erect variety but not a spreading one. The extra yield from an erect variety (weed) was 259 lbs. per acre in contrast to 28 lbs. per acre from the spreading variety.

Studies on cotton at Coimbatore have brought to light five American types possessing a staple length of more than one inch. One Russian variety C 1998, was found to be highly productive (1,220 lbs. per acre) and adaptable while being equal to MCU-1, a local variety, in most of the other economic characters. Spraying the cotton crop with endrex resulted in an extra yield of about 500 lbs. of kapas (raw cotton) per acre.

ALL ABOUT HENS

How do you know the hen is a good layer or a poor one ? Here are the tips :

1. In a good layer, the comb and wattles are red, waxy in appearance, warm and fully developed. In a poor or non-layer, they are dull-coloured, shrivelled and cold.
2. In a good layer, the eyes are bright and prominent whereas they are dull and sunken in poor layers.
3. The vent is oval, soft and moist in a good layer, and small, round, dry and folded in a poor layer.
4. The abdomen of a good layer is large, full and pliable. It is small, shrunken and hard in non-layers.
5. The pubic bones are wide apart (two or more fingers in width) and pliable in a good layer. In a non-layer (or a poor layer), they are hard and can hardly allow one finger between them.

GLIMPSES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ

(*Continued from page* 3)

for that matter from all officials at the Block and District levels to their non-official counterparts. The differing temperaments, personalities and capabilities of the individuals concerned have no doubt played their part and made it a complex human and sociological problem. The officials who till now were accustomed to use their powers and privileges in a rather bureaucratic and patronising manner are learning to utilise the same by subordinating their 'self' to the dictates of the Panchayat Samiti chiefs. The latter also who in the first flush of power, would take irregular and irresponsible decisions are now gradually settling down and are having a clearer conception of their role and duties. The mutual fear and suspicion between the B.D.O. and the Pradhan that came to the fore in the initial stages, are now giving place to trust and regard for each other. Though the district officials still complain that they have to attend too many meetings at the Block and district headquarters and would rather have their number reduced considerably, yet in the context of the changed circumstances, they will have to satisfy the popular opinion. With the passage of time, these adjustments are bound to take place, thus paving way for the success of the Panchayati Raj.

THEY DISCUSS

With the introduction of the Panchayati Raj scheme personal contact between the Block Staff and the Villagers has become all the more essential. Through discussions they try to understand each other's points of view. The picture above shows a B.D.O. discussing the problems of the village with the Panches.

A PRACTICAL LESSON

Gardening is one of the important items of training of Gram Sevikas. The picture above shows the trainees of the Gram Sevika Training Centre, Fulia (West Bengal) having their practical lessons in the subject

Printed by the Manager, Government of India Press, Faridabad, and published by the Director, Publications Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Delhi-6, on behalf of the Ministry of Community Development and Cooperation.

Regd. D—877